

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Phoenix North



## 2015 IMPACT REPORT

# SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



## 90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as  
**18 MONTHS.**



By the time children are  
**3 & 4 YEARS OLD,**  
their vocabulary, attention and  
general knowledge are predictors of  
**THIRD & FOURTH GRADE**  
reading comprehension.



**THIRD GRADE**  
reading ability is one of the  
best predictors of  
**HIGH SCHOOL**  
**GRADUATION.**



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

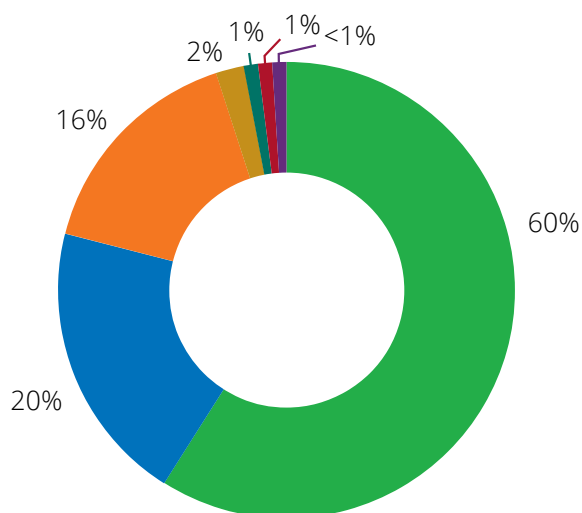
# \$1



INVESTED IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A  
**\$16 RETURN**

# FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

## PHOENIX NORTH FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$11,876,406.60**  
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$3,995,906.27**  
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Preventive Health \$3,114,917.44**  
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Workforce Development and Training \$344,845.78**  
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- Research and Accountability \$259,168.07**  
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$207,897.72**  
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- System Coordination \$77,777.15**  
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

**Total = \$19,876,919.03**

- 8,590** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 2,434** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 22,794** Families accessed early childhood information, education or referrals through family resource centers.
- 7,840** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 472** Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.
- 1,291** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 122** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 4,104** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

# INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



## RESOURCE CENTER HELPS PHOENIX MOTHER PREPARE HER DAUGHTER SOCIALLY AND ACADEMICALLY FOR SCHOOL

On most days, Gaby Acosta refills the snack machines throughout various schools in the Washington Elementary School District in Phoenix as part of her vending machine business. As a single mom, this was also a great opportunity to spend time with her baby. Since Magali Itzel could walk, she let her daughter accompany her to the schools.

Acosta knew that in the early years, kids absorb everything, so she wanted to expose her daughter to the world. This worked for a few years, but as Magali grew, Acosta noticed that her daughter didn't know how to interact with kids her age. At home, the adults gave the child all the attention she needed, but Acosta realized what her daughter needed now, was interaction with other kids.

So Acosta asked the receptionist, who she saw every day at Lakeview Elementary as she refilled the machines with snacks, "Do you have any programs for young kids who aren't in kindergarten?"

The woman behind the desk slipped a flyer across the counter with a list of programs for kids under 5 at the district's family resource center. First Things First funds the Washington Resource Information Center, where parents take classes on how to support their child's learning. There are also early literacy and kindergarten readiness programs for kids under 5.

At first it was overwhelming to find that there were so many options. Acosta didn't know anyone at the center, and knew she would have to overcome her own shyness, in order to help her daughter. Mother and daughter enrolled in one program after another. Magali learned skills like cutting, coloring, sharing, and interacting with other kids, while Acosta learned techniques for reinforcing all of these skills at home. Acosta learned the importance of daily reading, and it became a fun family activity. Telling each other stories was their way to bond. Acosta was sure she was on the right path.

"She was ready for kindergarten because of all the literacy and other programs at WRIC," Acosta said. Today, Magali is a happy first grader at Washington Elementary School, where she is at the top of her class.

## PHOENIX NORTH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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## FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

American Academy of Pediatrics - AZ Chapter  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Arizona Partnership for Children, L.L.P.  
Association for Supportive Child Care  
Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., dba Parenting Arizona  
Child and Family Resources Inc.  
Children's Action Alliance  
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Raising Special Kids  
Southwest Human Development  
TERROS  
United Cerebral Palsy of Central Arizona  
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension  
Valley of the Sun United Way  
Washington Elementary School District

